

Additional educational resources

Useful website

Center for Outcomes Research (www.dvt.org)—useful information for professionals, with links to other sites and access to some research papers

Information for patients

Investigators against thromboembolism

(www.inate.org)—useful website for professionals and patients, with links to other sites

www.heartonline.com—useful website for professionals and patients, with information on cardiovascular disease and its risk factors and links to other sites

has been shown in the development of new antithrombotic agents, as shown by the progress from unfractionated heparin to the low molecular weight heparins and thence, fondaparinux and similar agents. Although aspirin and clopidogrel have their place, particularly in arterial thrombosis, development of new anticoagulants focuses on targeting the coagulation pathway—for example, thrombin and factor Xa. As a class, the direct thrombin inhibitors (hirudin, ximelagatran, dabigatran) are beginning to find their place in situations where heparin use is limited, and some may eventually replace warfarin.²⁹ Like fondaparinux, idraparinux is a heparinoid pentasaccharide, but the long half-life of the latter (80 hours) means it may be given once weekly.²⁹

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So, those who can't do it, teach it?

It has been said that "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches." I have often wondered whether there is any truth behind this frequently quoted expression, which surgical students hear from the early days of their clinical training. To find the answer, one must look at the origin of the phrase itself—back to the Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw (1903). Shaw, however, was referring to revolutionaries, not teachers. The phrase is, therefore, used out of context.

Most of us, looking back over our training, can attribute our choice of specialty to one or more mentors—teachers so enthusiastic and inspirational that they instilled within us the desire to better ourselves and thereby better serve our patients. They taught us to think for ourselves. Most of us will also admit that these inspiring individuals were not just devoted teachers but

had notably inquiring minds and were almost always exceptional clinicians.

Charles H Mayo (1865-1939), one of the founders of the internationally renowned Mayo Clinic, once said: "The safest thing for a patient is to be in the hands of a man involved in teaching medicine. In order to be a teacher of medicine the doctor must always be a student." Therefore, the next time you hear Shaw quoted out of context, perhaps you might respond by quoting Mayo, a man described not only as an inspirational teacher but also as a "surgical wonder."

Perhaps those who don't teach it can't do it as well as they think.

Farhad B Naini consultant in facial deformity, St George's Hospital and Medical School, London (farhad@naini.freeserve.co.uk)